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Sustainable development: United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Azanaw Tadesse **Abreha** (Ethiopia)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 85 (see A/59/483, para. 2). Action on sub-item (g) was taken at the 18th and 27th meetings, on 27 October and 5 November 2004. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/59/SR.18 and 27).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/59/L.9 and A/C.2/59/L.24

2. At the 18th meeting, on 27 October, the representative of Japan introduced a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (A/C.2/59/L.9). Subsequently, Algeria, Andorra, Cambodia, China, El Salvador, Gabon, Iceland, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Lithuania, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uganda and the United States of America joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* chapter 36 of Agenda 21, on promoting education, public awareness and training, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in nine parts, under the symbol A/59/483 and Add.1-8.

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"*Recalling also* the work programme on education, public awareness and training, adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session in 1996 and elaborated upon at its sixth session in 1998,

"*Recalling further* the relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ('Johannesburg Plan of Implementation') on education, in particular its provision 124 (d) on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 57/254 of 20 December 2002 and 58/219 of 23 December 2003,

"*Welcoming* the fact that the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eleventh session, identified education as one of the cross-cutting issues of its multi-year programme of work,

"*Reaffirming* the internationally agreed development goal of achieving universal primary education, in particular that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling,

"*Taking note* of the oral report provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly regarding its preparations for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,

"*Emphasizing* that education is an indispensable element for achieving sustainable development,

"1. *Reaffirms* that education for sustainable development is critical for promoting sustainable development and in this regard recalls that the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development will begin on 1 January 2005;

"2. *Takes note* of the draft International Implementation Scheme, prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in coordination with other relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, and requests the organization, as the designated lead agency, to continue to promote the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, in cooperation with Governments, the United Nations and other relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders;

"3. *Calls upon* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to distribute the draft International Implementation Scheme to all Member States for their comments, with a view to expeditiously finalizing the Scheme;

"4. *Encourages* Governments to consider the inclusion of measures to implement the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in their respective educational strategies and national development plans by 2005, in consultation with all stakeholders and taking into account, as appropriate, the finalized International Implementation Scheme;

"5. *Invites* Governments to promote public awareness of and wider participation in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, including through cooperation with and initiatives engaging civil society and other relevant stakeholders, especially at the beginning of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development;

"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to invite the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to prepare a report on the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, for submission to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session under the sub-item entitled 'Mid-term review of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development'."

3. At the 27th meeting, on 5 November, the Facilitator, Eva Tomič (Slovenia), on behalf of the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Ewa Anzorge (Poland), introduced and orally corrected a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (A/C.2/59/L.24), which she submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.9.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.24, as orally corrected (see para. 6).

5. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.24, draft resolution A/C.2/59/L.9 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

6. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The General Assembly,

Recalling chapter 36 of Agenda 21,[1] on promoting education, public awareness and training, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992,

Recalling also the work programme on education, public awareness and training initiated by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session in 1996[2] and elaborated upon at its sixth session in 1998,[3]

Recalling further the relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")[4] on education to promote sustainable development, in particular its provision 124,

Recalling its resolutions 57/254 of 20 December 2002 and 58/219 of 23 December 2003,

Underlining in this regard the fact that the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development shall begin on 1 January 2005,

Welcoming the fact that the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eleventh session, identified education as one of the cross-cutting issues of its multi-year programme of work,[5]

Reaffirming the internationally agreed development goal of achieving universal primary education, in particular that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that boys and girls will have equal access to all levels of education,

Taking note of the oral report presented on 18 October 2004 at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly by the Assistant Secretary-General for Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization regarding its preparations for the Decade,[6]

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 8* (E/1996/28), chap. I, sect. C, decision 4/11, para. 2.

[3] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 9* (E/1998/29), chap. I, sect. B, decision 6/3, sect. C.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[5] See Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003.

[6] See A/C.2/59/SR.14.

Taking note also of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,[7] in particular the reference to the issue "Learning to live with risk", as regards the need to focus on education and awareness, linked with the Decade, to be considered at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,[8]

Emphasizing that education is an indispensable element for achieving sustainable development,

1. *Reaffirms* that education for sustainable development is critical for promoting sustainable development;

2. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as the designated lead agency, to promote the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, in coordination with other relevant United Nations organizations and programmes, while taking into account the special needs of developing countries;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to call upon the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to finalize the draft international implementation scheme for the Decade as soon as possible, preferably by the beginning of the Decade, in consultation with Governments, the United Nations and relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, while clarifying its relationship with the existing educational processes, in particular the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum[9] and the United Nations Literacy Decade;[10]

4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to call upon the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to submit the draft international implementation scheme to the governing bodies of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for their final consideration and adoption;

5. *Encourages* Governments to consider the inclusion, especially upon completion and adoption of the international implementation scheme, of measures to implement the Decade in their respective educational systems and strategies and, where appropriate, national development plans;

6. *Invites* Governments to promote public awareness of and wider participation in the Decade, inter alia, through cooperation with and initiatives engaging civil society and other relevant stakeholders, especially at the beginning of the Decade;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to invite the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to prepare a mid-term review of the implementation of the Decade, for submission to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session under the sub-item entitled "United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development".

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[7] A/59/228.

[8] Ibid., para. 8.

[9] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

[10] See resolution 56/116.